

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 02608 01 OF 02 101302 Z

53

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

EB-11 AGR-20 NIC-01 SAJ-01 RSR-01 GAC-01 NEA-10

TRSE-00 STR-08 OMB-01 COME-00 /155 W

----- 020491

R 101217 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7081

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 2608

PARIS, COPENHAGEN FOR SECRETARY SHULTZ

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UR

SUBJ: BREZHNEV DEMONSTRATES STRENGTHENED POSITION

1. SUMMARY. HIGH LEVEL OF GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV'S ACTIVITIES DURING PAST MONTH, TOGETHER WITH EXTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE DEVOTED TO HIM, HAVE HIGHLIGHTED HIS POSITION AS PRIMUS INTER PARES WITHIN PARTY HIERARCHY. DOMESTICALLY, BREZHNEV APPEARS IN FIRM CONTROL OF PARTY APPARATUS WHILE IN REALM OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HE HAS OPTED TO SET TONE FOR SOVIET POLICY ON MANY IF NOT MOST OF KEY ISSUES. FOR REASONS WHICH ARE NOT YET FULLY CLEAR,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 02608 01 OF 02 101302 Z

BREZHNEV IS APPARENTLY INTERESTED IN DEMONSTRATING MORE SELF- ASSURED AND PROMINENT ROLE IN COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP AT PRESENT MOMENT. NEVERTHELESS, THERE CONTINUES THE APPARENT LIMITATIONS ON HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION. END SUMMARY.

2. PAST MONTH HAS BEEN ONE OF UNUSUAL ACTIVITY INCLUDING INCREASED PUBLIC EXPOSURE FOR BREZHNEV. AS FEBRUARY BEGAN, BREZHNEV' S HAND COULD BE SEEN IN RESHUFFLE WITHIN NATION' S AGRICULTURAL HIERARCHY WHICH LED TO DEMOTION OF FELLOW POLITBURO MEMBER PLOYANSKIY WHILE AT SAME TIME SIGNALING INCREASED ROLE FOR MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. CHAIN OF EVENTS LEADING FROM BREZHNEV' S TOUR TO SIBERIAN AND VIRGIN LAND AGRICULTURAL HIERARCHY HAS OVERALL EFFECT OF SIGNALING BREZHNEV' S PERSONAL CONCERN ABOUT IMPROVING COUNTRY' S AGRICULTURAL PERFORMANCE WHILE AT SAME TIME SHIFTING BLAME FORPAST FAILURES TO OTHERS.

3. FEBRUARY 19 AWARD CEREMONY HONORING POLITBURO MEMBER AND SUPREME SOVIET CHAIRMAN PODGORNIY ON OCCASION OF HIS 70 TH BIRTHDAY PROVIDED ANOTHER OCCASION FOR PUBLIC EXPOSURE WHICH WAS AT SAME TIME NOTEWORTHY FOR PRAISE WHICH PODGORNIY HEAPED UPON BREZHNEV. SPEAKING OF THE " OUTSTANDING CONDITIONS OF COMRADELY TRUST AND UNITY WHICH EXISTS AMONG US IN THE PARTY, IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND IN THE POLITBURO," HE SAID, " WE CORRECTLY SEE IN THIS THE SERVICE OF THE PRESENT COMPOSITION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE POLITBURO, AND THE GREAT PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION OF L. I. BREZHNEV, IN BRILLIANTLY UNIFYING AND ORGANIZING OUR COLLECTIVE, OR ENTIRE PARTY IN DECIDING THE TASKS CONFRONTING US."

4. BREZHNEV' S TRAVEL TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA (FEB. 21-25) TO ATTEND THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE 25 TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMUNIST TAKE- OVER, PROVIDED YET ANOTHER OCCASION FOR ENHANCING HIS PRESTIGE AND FOR HEAVY MEDIA COVERAGE. IT IS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY THAT BREZHNEV WENT TO PRAGUE UNACCOMPANIED BY ANY OTHER SENIOR PARTY OFFICIALS. THE TRIP, COMING AT TIME WHEN CZECHS COULD ASSERT THAT SITUATION IN COUNTRY HAD RETURNED TO NORMAL FOLLOWING DUBCEK ADVENTURE, HAD EFFECT OF PERSONALLY ASSOCIATING BREZHNEV WITH CORRECTNESS OF SOVIET POLICY IN DEALING WITH CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION OVER LONG TERM. IN ADDITION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 02608 01 OF 02 101302 Z

TO USUAL MOSCOW DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL PICTURES, SOVIET

MASS MEDIA DEVOTED HEAVY COVERAGE TO BREZHNEV'S ACTIVITIES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. ON FEBRUARY 24 VIRTUALLY 75 PERCENT OF THE SPACE ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE CENTRAL PRESS WAS DEVOTED TO BREZHNEV IN PRAGUE. FULLY 40 MINUTES OF EVENING TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE ON FEBRUARY 23 WAS DEVOTED TO THE PRAGUE CELEBRATIONS WITH BREZHNEV GETTING CENTRAL ATTENTION.

5. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS SURROUNDING ISSUANCE OF NEW PARTY CARDS PROVIDED FURTHER EVIDENCE OF BREZHNEV'S STANDING ON LEADERSHIP LADDER. ALL CENTRAL PRESS MARCH 2 CARRIED LARGE, FRONT-PAGE, PHOTOS OF BREZHNEV SIGNING CARD NO. 000001 ISSUED IN NAME OF LENIN. LESS PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED WAS PICTURE OF MOSCOW-BASED LEADERSHIP ATTENDING CEREMONY. (IT INTERESTING THAT GRISHIN, SHELEST AND SHELEPIN WERE NOT SHOWN IN PICTURES ALTHOUGH LISTED IN REPORTS AS PARTICIPATING IN CEREMONY.) FOLLOWING DAY (MARCH 3) CENTRAL PRESS ANNOUNCED, IN RELATIVELY LENGTHY ARTICLES, THAT BREZHNEV RECEIVED HIS NEW PARTY CARD (NO. 000002) IN PRESENCE OF PARTY SECRETARIES. ALTHOUGH PHOTOS OF CEREMONY NOT CARRIED IN PRESS, EVENING TELEVISION NEWS DID HAVE COVERAGE OF EVENT. ONLY NEXT DAY (MARCH 4) DID CENTRAL PRESS HAVE BRIEF REPORT THAT OTHER PARTY LEADERS HAD RECEIVED THEIR NEW CARDS.

CONFIDENTIAL

ADP000

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 02608 02 OF 02 101348 Z

50

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

EB-11 AGR-20 NIC-01 RSR-01 SAJ-01 GAC-01 NEA-10

TRSE-00 STR-08 OMB-01 COME-00 /155 W

----- 020711

R 101217 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7082

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 2608

6. BREZHNEV HAS ALSO PLAYED AN ACTIVE ROLE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF LATE, SETTING THE TONE FOR SOVIET POLICY ON MANY IF NOT MOST OF THE KEY ISSUES. HE HAS IDENTIFIED HIMSELF STRONGLY WITH THE VIETNAM SETTLEMENT, MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH FREQUENT MOSCOW VISITOR LE DUC THO AND OUTLINING SOVIET POSTWAR ATTITUDES IN A BANQUET SPEECH ON JANUARY 30. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THIS DECEMBER 21 REBUKE TO THE US ON RENEWED BOMBING, HE HAD REMAINED OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT ON VIETNAM ISSUES UNTIL THE OUTCOME COULD BE BILLED AS A SUCCESS. IN APPARENT EFFORT TO ERASE SCARS LEFT BY LAST JULY'S EXPULSION OF SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS AND IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH SEARCH FOR PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST, BREZHNEV RECEIVED BOTH SADAT ADVISER HAFEZ ISMAIL (FEB. 8) AND WAR MINISTER ISMAIL-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 02608 02 OF 02 101348 Z

ALI (FEB. 27). SIMILARLY, BREZHNEV MET WITH SOUTH YEMENI PRIME MINISTER (MAR. 8). FACT THAT BREZHNEV SHOULD CHOOSE TO RECEIVE JAPANESE AMBASSADOR (MAR. 6) CARRYING MESSAGE FROM JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER (IN CONTRAST TO HIS FAILURE TO MEET LAST OCTOBER WITH FONMIN OHIRA) ALSO IDENTIFIED BREZHNEV WITH NEW EFFORT TO IMPROVE HITHERTO FROZEN SOVIET- JAPANESE RELATIONS. INSIDE THE BLOC, BREZHNEV HAS TAKEN LEAD TO BOOST SOLIDARITY WITH FRATERNAL COUNTRIES; IN ADDITION TO HIS VISIT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HE WAS ONLY TOP LEADER TO MEET WITH NORTH KOREAN PARTY DELEGATION (FEB. 28) AND HE EVEN MET WITH DEPARTING CUBAN AMBASSADOR (MAR. 7) IN MEETING WHICH COULD HAVE US- CUBAN AS WELL AS PARTY SIGNIFICANCE.

7. ASIDE FROM PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF CHINA, PRINCIPAL CLOUD ON BREZHNEV'S HORIZON CONCERNS US- SOVIET ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THEIR POSSIBLE IMPACT ON RETURN VISIT TO U. S. IN RECEIVING ARMAND HAMMER (FEB. 15), BREZHNEV LENT HIS PERSONAL INFLUENCE, HOWEVER, TO CURRENT SOVIET CAMPAIGN FOR INCREASED TRADE WITH U. S. VISIT OF SECRETARY SHULTZ WILL TEST HOW FAR BREZHNEV WISHES TO GO IN IDENTIFYING HIMSELF WITH MOST VULNERABLE ASPECT OF HIS POLICY TOWARD U. S.

8. DESPITE EVIDENCE OF A PERHAPS STRENGTHENED PERSONAL POSITION, CIRCUMSTANCES SUGGEST THAT BREZHNEV STILL DOES NOT HAVE, AND PERHAPS DOES NOT ACTIVELY SEEK, COMPLETE FREEDOM OF ACTION. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT BREZHNEV HAS EITHER NOT BEEN ABLE, OR CONSIDERED IT UNWISE, TO TRY TO REMOVE THOSE WHO LOST OUT IN PAST POWER PLAYS, SUCH AS SHELEPIN, VORONOV AND SHELEST. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED WITH POLYANSKIY APPOINTMENT, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS ABLE TO PLACE ONE OF YOUNGER, ABLER LEADERS IN VULNERABLE POSITION. INFLUENCE OF KOSYGIN APPARENTLY REMAINS STRONG (WITNESS HIS RECENT TROUBLE- SHOOTING MISSION TO TYUMEN AND UFA OIL AND GAS PRODUCING REGIONS, AND HIS ANNOUNCED VISIT TO SCANDINAVIA). BREZHNEV HAS CHOSEN, HOWEVER, TO MEET THIS PAST MONTH WITH DELEGATIONS (E. G., S. YEMENI AND JAPANESE) WHO WERE RECEIVED BY KOSYGIN LAST YEAR, AND OCCASIONAL MEETINGS BETWEEN KOSYGIN AND FOREIGNERS, E. G., DEPARTING ITALIAN AMBASSADOR (FEB. 18), ARE GIVEN MUCH LESS PROMINENCE THAN THOSE WITH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 02608 02 OF 02 101348 Z

BREZHNEV. IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER BREZHNEV WOULD WISH TO TAKE ON BURDEN OF IDENTIFICATION WITH AILING SOVIET INDUSTRY ON TOP OF AGRICULTURE. FACT THAT ONLY PRAVDA UKRAINY REPORTED MEETING BETWEEN UKRAINIAN PARTY LEADERSHIP, LED BY POLITBURO PROTEGE SHCHERBITSKIY, AND BREZHNEV EN ROUTE TO PRAGUE SUGGESTS THAT DISCUSSION MAY HAVE HAD INTRA- PARTY IMPLICATIONS (E. G. STRENGTHENING SHCHERBITSKIY' S POSITION VIS- A- VIS SHELEST) WHICH BREZHNEV PREFERRED NOT TO PUBLICIZE IN CENTRAL PRESS.

9. COMMENT: BECAUSE BREZHNEV IS ASSERTING HIMSELF MORE TODAY DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE HAS CLEAR SAILING AHEAD. THE INTERNAL PARTY SITUATION AND THE BURDENS OF LEADERSHIP OF SO COMPLEX A STRUCTURE AS THE USSR SUGGEST THAT COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP WILL REMAIN THE CORNERSTONE OF PARTY POLICY, THEREBY IMPOSING CONSTRAINTS ON BREZHNEV' S FREEDOM OF ACTION. ADDITIONALLY, HE FACES ENOUGH INTERNAL (AGRICULTURE, GENERAL ECONOMY) AND FOREIGN POLICY (CHINA, MIDDLE EAST, US- SOVIET ECONOMIC) PROBLEMS SO THAT HE REMAINS POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM AND EVEN CHALLENGE. HOWEVER, OUR ANALYSIS REMAINS ESSENTIALLY THAT OF LAST FALL (MOSCOW 8918). GIVEN BREZHNEV' S ABILITY AT INFIGHTING, HE SHOULD MANAGE TO SPREAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY SETBACKS, AND THERE IS NO SERIOUS DANGER THAT HIS POWER BASE WILL BE ERODED IN THE COMING MONTHS UNLESS HE IS STRUCK BY AN UNLIKELY CONSTELLATION OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC CRISES.

DUBS

CONFIDENTIAL

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MOSCOW02608
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730325/aaaahlsx.tel
Line Count: 282
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jul-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <23-Aug-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 971118
Subject: BREZHNEV DEMONSTRATES STRENGTHENED POSITION
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, DA, RS
To: BELGRADE
BUCHAREST
BUDAPEST
COPENHAGEN
EUR
PRAGUE
SECSTATE WASHDC

SOFIA
WARSAW

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005